

Oversight and Coordination Committee  
Early Learning Council  
Ounce of Prevention Fund, 33 W. Monroe  
January 10, 2012  
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Minutes**

**Participants**

**Chicago-** Shannon Christian, Kim Collins, Paula Cottone, Marsha Enquist, Dan Harris, Yolanda James, Holly Knicker, Tom Layman, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Gail Nelson, Kathy Penak, Christine Ryan, Ellen Schumer, Teri Talan, Liliana Velazquez, Judith Walker-Kendrick, Cindy Zumwalt

**Phone-** Theresa Hawley, Janice Moenster, Jamilah Jor'dan, Cindy Mahr, Sylvia Puente, Gina Ruther, Sara Slaughter, Lauri Walker

**Non-Participating Members-** Brenda Arksey, Lindsay Blough, Mary Ellen Caron, Barbara Castellan, Erin Cetera, Ellen Chavez, Rhonda Clark, George Davis, Dawn Thomas, Dina Evans, Karen Freel, Eric Gershenson, Kathy Goetz Wolf, Barbara Grace, Lesile Janes, Michael Johnson, Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Marsha Orr, Martha Owens, Naomi Samuels, Andrea Sass, Linda Saterfield, Joyce Thomas, Katie Williams

I. Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Teri Talan welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. The minutes were amended to reflect a conversation regarding CPS's policy on home visiting for three year olds. At the November 30<sup>th</sup> meeting during the Hard to Reach application discussion one of the applicants expressed concerns that CPS does not currently allow three year olds to continue in home visiting programs if their birth date does not allow them to start Preschool For All (PFA), therefore there is a gap in care. CPS said that there is no difference in ISBE and CPS policy. In this specific instance there seems to be an implementation issue. CPS is committed to keeping the continuity of care and will work with the specific agency on this specific case.

II. Updates

- Early Learning Challenge Results

The committee reviewed the strengths and weaknesses identified by the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge reviewer comments.

Strengths:

- Research and evaluation of the QRIS
- Strong approach to increase participation in the QRIS- could be too ambitious
- Workforce
- Kindergarten entry tool (KIDS)
  - It was not fully implemented enough so the state lost points

### Weaknesses

- Many criteria were only perceived as partially implemented
- Automatic rating of four stars for PFA and Head Start
  - The application needed to better explain the plan for visiting and verifying the four star rating
- Family child care plan
- Support for newly rated programs

#### Committee member observations on reviewers' QRIS comments:

- Multiple places in the grant where the reviewers did not understand the state's plan
- \$70 million is not enough in Illinois to help all programs improve quality- in small states the money has a bigger impact
- Reviewers had the assumption that every setting has the potential to be a 5 star program- this is not a good assumption
- The \$70 million would not solve all of the state's problems. Illinois needs to keep asking what is best for the target population.

### III. Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

The Oversight and Coordination Committee was identified in the RTT-ELC application as the Early Learning Council Committee to discuss the QRIS. The Committee needs to determine what its role will be in the QRIS moving forward.

- The group should think about how the state positions itself to apply for a second round of RTT-ELC funding
- The Committee can look at monitoring and supporting the QRIS and ways that it can improve
  - Look at testing the idea of grandfathering in PFA and Head Start programs
- The role of the Committee is yet to be defined.

#### QRIS discussion:

- Incentive funding for higher levels in the QRIS
  - Currently no incentives for PFA and Head Start centers to move up
  - Incentives were not included in the application because the plan is still under consideration
  - Competition may or may not be enough for providers to improve
    - Other states see QRIS ratings as a consumer driven tactic like restaurant stars.
      - Some states give incentives to all
      - Some states take away reimbursements for lower level QRIS providers
    - The Committee will be sent QRIS information on other state's systems compiled by DHS
- The purpose of the QRIS is to create a common language on early learning and allows states to move quality forward in a big picture way

- The Committee should provide recommendations and keep the information flowing regarding the work of other related committees/advisory groups
- The State is still working to determine how the early childhood coordination process will look moving forward
- No state that invests heavily in preschool won RTT-ELC
- No other states suggested moving forward a QRIS that contains a strong licensing structure as the base and integrates state funded preschool.
- States were not given points for strong systems for children- example: no waiting lists for CCAP
- States that won have a government structure that all early childhood programs are in one state agency
- The Administrative Rules are still out for public comment until January 30<sup>th</sup>. No decisions on the QRIS will be made until after the comment period ends.
- The state is working to bring a small group of people together to create a consistent message around the RTT-ELC initiatives.

#### IV. Hard to Reach Grants

- Award Recipients

Co-Chair Judith Walker-Kendrick thanked COFI and the staff for the work done to identify the seven Hard to Reach pilots. Kim Collins walked through the handout summarizing each of the selected pilots.

The Committee recommended issuing 15 month contracts to make budgeting easier for the pilots.

- Evaluation Discussion

The University of Illinois Champaign Urbana will be the evaluator for the Hard to Reach pilots. Susan Fowler and Dawn Thomas spoke with the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development and was looking for feedback on the current list of items that will be evaluated and any suggestions on the evaluation.

- Expand the review of collaborative relationships to include community organizations such as churches
- Track information on target families that enroll in PFA or Head Start and the role of the community
- Look at how this specific funding reached the Hard to Reach families
- Look at the dosage of proposed projects
- Track the change in the number of children for the target grouped enrolled in High Quality Early Learning Programs.
- Look at the reasons the families say they left a program and why the staff says they left.
- Focus on renewability
- The Early Learning Council recommended a rate increase for hard to reach children- this will test the effectiveness of that recommendation
- Will the evaluator do surveys or interviews?

- Review the cost implications for the pilots; policy changes can be free

Next Steps:

- The Committee will revisit creating a subgroup to work with the evaluators
- At the meeting in March UIUC will present information on their initial work with the pilots.
- COFI is interested in staying involved
  - Putting together policy briefs
  - Would like to be a part of the evaluation conversation
  - Willing to do trainings for interested pilots

V. Wrap Up and Next Steps

Co-Chair Judith Walker-Kendrick closed the meeting by announcing that the next meeting will be March 27<sup>th</sup>.